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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

August 1, 2019

More Reflections from General Synod

Grace to you and peace! I want to share a few more reflections on items from General Synod. There were two resolutions that caused me to ponder about what it means to be in covenant within the United Church of Christ. Both resolutions were tabled.

One of the resolutions entitled "Oversight of the Local Church and it's Covenantal Relationship with the Association in Which it Holds Standing as a Local Church of the UCC" lifted up the fact that Associations and Conferences acting as Associations vote to receive local churches into membership.

However, there are no guidelines on how to release churches that do not remain in covenant with the Association/Conference. The Conference that submitted the resolution sited a draft "Manual on Church" from 2005 in which being in covenant included such things as sending delegates to Conference Meetings; participating in Ecclesiastical Councils; nominating church members for membership on Conference Committees; providing statistics and other information; contributing to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). But there were no guidelines on how to respond to churches that were not involved in any of these activities. Although there was some discussion about the resolution, it was tabled. No further action was taken. It may be of interest to note that there is a Committee being formed to write a new "Manual on Church."

The other resolution that was tabled was entitled "Stewardship of Exhibit Space as a Resource for a Mission of Justice." It focused on space at the Exhibit Hall at General Synod. It raised the issue of whether groups that do not support the Open and Affirming position of the UCC should be allowed



to have space at the Exhibit Hall. This resulted in a lively discussion that seemed to evolve into a polarity between the UCC as a progressive denomination and one being inclusive of everyone, even those with whom we do not agree. However, it is important to remember that the resolution was actually focused on who can have space in the Exhibit Hall which requires the use of UCC financial resources to exist. After a spirited and challenging discussion, the resolution was tabled. However, the United Church Board did some listening to individuals after sessions and there is a hope that ideas will evolve in how to address this important issue.

So, what does it mean to be in covenant? What expectations are there when we state that we are in covenant with each other? How do we listen to one another in ways that help us understand why some churches chose to not meet those expectations? How does the idea of covenant speak to welcoming everyone, including those with whom we disagree, particularly when it comes to justice issues? Questions for all of us to ponder! May the Spirit provide us with wisdom!

Blessings, Char Burch

News from the Conference Office



Coffee with Char and Heather: (A Virtual Conversation)

All authorized ministers are invited to “have coffee” with Char and Heather through our virtual technology. Our focus this time will be on how the National setting of the UCC is organized (there have been a lot of changes in recent years) and how the National setting might be helpful in your ministry. We will use our Zoom meeting platform, which provides room for 50 people to gather, either through the computer or on the phone.

There are two coffee hours set up:

- Tuesday, August 20 at 10 a.m. Eastern time ([Reserve a spot](#))
- Thursday, August 22 at 7 p.m. Eastern time ([Reserve a spot](#))

After you have made a reservation, you will receive an email a few days prior to the reserved date providing you with the link for the connection.

Remember that this can be done via phone, without the need to use a computer. If you need assistance making a “reservation” please contact Heather at hfosburgh@secucc.org or 404-719-6572. Come and join with your colleagues in conversation!

Join the 2020 Annual Meeting Planning Committee

The 2020 Southeast Conference Annual Meeting is only 10 months away! It is time to start planning for a spiritually uplifting gathering of our Conference community. This year, we invite anyone interested in serving on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee to submit your name for consideration. Our goal is to have a planning committee representative of the rich diversity of our Conference so that we can celebrate that richness together.

The tentative date of the 2020 Annual Meeting is June 18-21, and the proposed site is in Montgomery, Alabama. If you would like to serve on the Planning Committee, you are committing to attending meetings (August in Montgomery; October in Marietta; May in Montgomery) and five virtual meetings (September, November, February, March, April).

If you would like to share your time and talents to help plan our Annual Meeting, please fill out the form at the link below. You will be contacted by Ugena Whitlock, Conference Vice Moderator and Chair of the Planning Committee by August 5.

[JOIN THE PLANNING COMMITTEE](#)

Save the Date for Our 2020 Annual Meeting

Next year's Annual Meeting will be June 19-20, 2020 at Community Congregational UCC in Montgomery Alabama. We are excited that the Rev. Traci Blackmon, UCC Associate General Minister for Justice and Local

Church Ministries, will be with us as our special guest. Mark your calendars now!

From the Generosity Coordinator

Greetings and blessings all,

Hope your summer has been amazing. It has been filled with lots of travel and hard work which has been most exhilarating and rewarding. I have exciting information to share with you as I continue to be in conversation with other conferences throughout this denominations. I really think the information will be invaluable to us as we move forward, **TOGETHER!!** Can't wait to discuss planned giving, wills and estates.



Luke 6:38 teaches: "Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you". (NIV).

If you have not received your statements for your second quarter giving, check your mail. This statement reflects your contributions thru July 15, 2019. A huge **CONGRATULATIONS** and **THANK YOU** for all the ways you continue to support this Southeast Conference United Church of Christ. We are so very grateful. We still have a ways to go, but I am persuaded that we will reach our goals.

Please continue to invite me to your church...there is so much that I want to share with all of you. Together, we really are better.

Blessings as we continue to journey...**TOGETHER**,
Min. Carrole



Boundary Training 101 Scheduled for Sept. 17, 2019

by Carrole Moss

Date: Tuesday, September 17, 2019

Place: Metro Atlanta (specific location TBD)

Event: Healthy Boundary Training 101

Time: 9:00 am until 4:00 pm

Did you know that it is now a **REQUIREMENT that all Ordained, Licensed and Commissioned clergy** serving in the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ complete this training by December 2019? As of January 1, 2018 it has been mandated that all clergy attend this training and follow up every four years for a refresher course. This course will help you to learn or, refresh you on what your boundaries are, appropriate and inappropriate behavior, not just in the pulpit, but in your everyday life. It helps you with relationships, self care, social media and other issues.

There are stories of misconduct by clergy in the news, on social media, in our conversations, and on our minds, every day. Please **DO NOT** allow your name and your story to become a part of the media circus. Times have changed, people have changed...the conduct that was tolerated 10-20 years ago is no longer acceptable. Please help us to help you by making plans to attend this training. Remember: **Healthy Boundary Training is MANDATORY!!!**

[REGISTER FOR BOUNDARY TRAINING](https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=01d4c5139f7be9d4d4ff4c63a&id=59efb9cc97)

Friends of the Conference - Thank You!

Thank you to those of you who have contributed to the "Friends of the Conference Fund." We have received \$2,542 since January from individuals who have made the extra effort to support the mission and ministry of the Conference. We are blessed!

If you are interested in supporting this special fund, contributions can be made online through the Conference website at www.secucc.org or by sending a check payable to the Southeast Conference, PO Box 1950, Decatur, GA 30031 indicating that it is for the "Friends of the Conference" Fund.

You can make a difference so that together we can make a difference!



Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2019. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of August 5

- Unity UCC; Montgomery, Alabama
- Marsha Brown
- Kathryn Hauk
- Lewis Kola
- Robert Rezash
- Sonya Gravlee

Week of August 12

- First Congregational UCC; Savannah, Georgia
- Mary Brueggemann
- Rose Hermonat
- Derrick Rice
- George Thomas

In Our Prayers

- **Rev. Dan Rosemergy**, long-term pastor of Brookemeade Congregational in Nashville, recently passed away. A memorial service will be held in Nashville on August 24, 2019. [A full obituary and more details on our website.](#)

Churches in Transition

Central Congregational, Atlanta, GA; United Church of Huntsville, Huntsville AL; First Congregational, Birmingham AL; Pilgrimage, Marietta GA; First Congregational Christian, Montgomery AL; First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL

News from the Wider Church

General Synod Supports Environmental Issues

by Char Burch

General Synod delegates passed three resolutions that address environmental issues. The UCC was the first denominational body to support the Green New Deal. The resolution addressing the use of plastic foam (i.e. Styrofoam®) is a challenge for local churches to consider how they currently use plastic foam and how they can change! Below are the titles of the resolutions.

1. Declaring Support for the Green New Deal And Affirming The Intersectionality Of Climate Justice With All Justice Issues.
2. On Support For The Energy Innovation And Carbon Dividend Act Of 2019.
3. Resolution Regarding The Use Of Plastic Foam (I.E. Styrofoam®)

Go to <http://ucceverywhere.org/synod/> for the full text of the Resolutions.

Manual on Church Survey

Help the working group revamping the Manual identify its scope and function, as they are seeking input from lay congregational leadership, clergy and committee on ministry members conference staff. [Click here to take the survey.](#)



Back Bay Mission Needs More Mission Trip Volunteers!

Our UCC-related mission in Biloxi, Mississippi needs more volunteers to get the houses on their list renovated. If you have been to Back Bay before you know of the valuable life-changing work they are doing. Please look to see when your group can return! If you have not been down on a mission trip with your church or organization please look into what they have to offer. Mission trips to Back Bay Mission are great opportunities for learning, service, and fellowship. These week-long immersive mission experiences teach participants about poverty on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and prepare groups to serve in their own communities.

[Click here to learn more about mission trips at Back Bay Mission, including how to register!](#)

- Dates available for 2019! [View the 2019 Mission Trip Calendar](#)
- Dates available for 2020! [View the 2020 Mission Trip Calendar](#)

Understanding Insurance

from the Insurance Board

Do you have items in your church that are valuable? If so, you need to decide if you should “schedule” these items. Not sure? Let’s examine the benefits of scheduling. Let’s begin with what it means to schedule an item. [Read more on Page 4 of the Summer 2019 Insurance Board Newsletter.](#)

News from our Local Congregations



Fabulous! Gulf Shrimp Boil

Pleasant Hill Community Church (Pleasant Hill TN) held a Gulf Shrimp Boil on July 27th to benefit Back Bay Mission. The event is being described by some as ‘fabulous’! Back Bay Mission was founded in 1922 and is serving the Biloxi MS area by strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, and transforming lives, in part, with thanks to a donation of nearly \$1,500 from this gulf shrimp boil. Action Team Leader of the event was PHCC member Mary Ruth who serves on the Back Bay Mission Board of Directors. [Read more on our website.](#)



Central Congregational Atlanta Supports Refugees in Georgia

Central Congregational UCC in Atlanta has taken on the challenge of addressing the injustices and suffering related to the current U.S. immigration policy. Recently they gave a \$1,500 grant from Central's Endowment Fund to help buy supplies for the Atlanta Transit Angels. Central member Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown is active with ATA and has helped organize her Practical Theology Sunday School class to pack food kits, 100 every few weeks, for the refugees. [Read more on our website.](#)

Training and Learning Opportunities



Climate Justice Training: Call for Applications

by Michael Malcom, SECUCC Environmental Justice Representative

The Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ and The People's Justice Council are nominating up to three Authorized UCC Ministers per state to attend the Southeast Faith Leaders Network climate justice training Sunday-Tuesday October 27-29 at Christmount Retreat Center located near Asheville, NC.

This training is a pre-event for a larger Southeast Faith Leaders Network event in 2020. Please turn in this application by September 6, 2019. Participants will be notified of their selection the week of September 9. We are especially interested in faith leaders working for environmental justice. [Learn more on our website.](#)



The Youth Climate Movement A Moral Force

*A Free Webinar
Featuring*

Jamie Margolin



Webinar on the Youth Climate Movement as a Moral Force

On Fridays throughout the world this past year, students walked out of classrooms and went into the streets to compel action in addressing the climate crisis. What started as a one-person protest by Greta Thunberg has grown to a movement of millions in over 160 countries and at least 2000 locations. Youth are now calling upon adults to join them for a week of action in September.

This month's [Creation Justice Webinar](#) will prepare us for action by featuring Jamie Margolin, the 17-year-old who has been at the forefront of

the youth climate movement in the United States. She led the call for last year's youth climate march, and she is a co-founder of the youth organization Zero Hour. The webinar will be held on August 15 at 1 pm ET, but a recording will be sent out to all who register. [Register now!](#)

This webinar is hosted by the United Church of Christ, Alabama Interfaith Power & Light, and the People's Justice Council.

Save the Date: Winter Youth Retreat

The Winter Youth Retreat 2020 committee announces a "save the date" of January 17-20, 2020.

The guest presenter this year will be Alicia Crosby. Crosby (she/hers) is a justice educator, activist, and (sometimes reluctant) minister whose work addresses the spiritual, systemic, and interpersonal harm people experience. Nashville-based acoustic-electric duo Ocean Elizabeth will be the featured band.

This year's theme will study the passage of 1 John 4:11-12. Registration will be open soon; read more about speaker and band at the retreat website: uccwinteryouthretreat.org.



United Church of Christ's National Youth Event will take place at Purdue University in West Lafayette Indiana July 22-25th 2020. This 4-day event is celebrated as the largest denominational gathering. Often bringing in 4,000 participants, this time together is centered on faith, leadership, service and social justice to empower our youth and young adults (ages 12-22).

Who: Youth and Young Adults ages 12-22

What: United Church of Christ's National Youth Event

When: July 22-25th, 2020
Where: Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana
Cost: \$375

Recommended reading for Retired UCC Servants' Retreat

(and others interested in ministry to/with this demographic)

The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully

by Joan Chittister

"Letting Go" -- "When physical eyesight declines," Plato said, "spiritual eyesight increases."

It is this spiritual eyesight, the ability to see into the inner meaning of things, the spiritual value of things, the essential core of things, that must carry us from this point on. And it is the spiritual essence of a person that emerges from the natural divestment that comes with old age. Life, it seems, follows a relentless cycle: in our early years we accumulate, but in our later years we divest. Both of them have a place in life. Both of them are a struggle. Both of them are liberating. [Chittister, The Gift of Years, p. 89, Kindle edition]

Registration is open for Ninth Annual Retired Servants' Retreat

Theme: GROWING WITH THE WINDS OF CHANGE

Time: Monday - Wednesday, October 7-9, 2019

Place: Blowing Rock Conference Center, Blowing Rock, North Carolina

[Learn more on our website](#)

Conference Calendar

Coffee with Char and Heather (Virtual Event)

August 20 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am EDT

Online Virtual Meeting

Coffee with Char and Heather (Virtual Event)

August 22 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT

Online Virtual Meeting

Staff Meeting

August 27 @ 9:00 am - 10:30 am EDT
Online Virtual Meeting

Healthy Boundaries 101: Fundamentals

September 17 @ 9:00 am - 4:00 pm EDT
Atlanta, GA

Board of Directors Retreat

September 20 - September 21
Covenant Community Church, Center Point, AL

Staff Meeting

September 24 @ 9:00 am - 10:30 am EDT
Online Virtual Meeting

Retired Servants Retreat

October 7 - October 9
Blowing Rock Conference Center

Southern Region Women's Retreat

October 18 - October 20
Blowing Rock Conference Center

Upper Room UCC Fellowship Fall Potluck Supper

October 26 @ 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm CDT
Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville, TN

Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Char Burch**; cburch@secucc.org

Assoc. Conference Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh**; hbardole@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss**; cmoss@secucc.org

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